

REMARKS

Applicants request that the above-identified application be re-examined.

Claims 1-39 are pending in the present application. The Office Action mailed January 23, 2007 (hereinafter "Office Action"), rejected Claims 1-39. More specifically, the Office Action rejected Claims 13, 25, and 38 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to nonstatutory subject matter. Further, Claims 1, 5, 7, 13, 14, 27, 28, 32, 38, and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0041054, to Mao et al. (hereinafter "Mao") in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2005/0209951, to Aron et al. (hereinafter "Aron"). The Office Action rejected Claims 3, 4, 6, 9, 29-31, and 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mao and Aron in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,163,147, issued to Orita (hereinafter "Orita"). The Office Action rejected Claims 8 and 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mao and Aron in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0099685, to Takano (hereinafter Takano). The Office Action rejected Claims 10 and 35 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mao and Aron in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,745,180, issued to Yamanoue (hereinafter "Yamanoue"). The Office Action rejected Claims 2, 15, 18, 20, 25, 26, and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mao and Aron in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,389,477, to Simmon et al. (hereinafter "Simmon"). The Office Action rejected Claims 16, 17, 19, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mao, Aron, and Simmon in view of Orita. Finally, the Office Action rejected Claim 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mao, Aron, and Simmon in view of Yamanoue.

The Office Action also objected to Claims 11, 12, 23, 24, 36, and 37 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of the allowability of the aforementioned claims.

In response, applicants have canceled Claims 2-11, 13-14, 16-23, 25-26, 28-36, and 38-39 and amended Claim 1 to include the limitations of canceled Claims 10 and 11. Similarly, Claim 15 has been amended to include the limitations of canceled Claims 22 and 23 and Claim 27 has been amended to include the limitations of canceled Claims 35 and 36. Claim 12 has been amended accordingly to depend from Claim 1. Claim 24 has been amended accordingly to depend from Claim 15 and Claim 37 has been amended accordingly to depend from Claim 27. Since all of the claims remaining in this application, as amended, are no longer dependent on rejected base claims and include allowable subject matter, applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable over the cited art.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 101

As noted above, Claims 13, 25, and 38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Since Claims 13, 25, and 38 have been canceled, applicants submit that the aforementioned rejection is rendered moot.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Rejection of Claims 1, 5, 7, 13-14, 27, 28, 32, 38, 39 in view of Mao in view of Aron

As noted above, Claims 1, 5, 7, 13, 14, 27, 28, 32, 38, and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mao in view of Aron. Since Claims 5, 7, 13, 14, 28, 32, 38, and 39 have been canceled, and Claims 1 and 27 have been amended to include allowable subject matter, applicants submit that the aforementioned rejection is rendered moot.

Rejection of Claims 3, 4, 6, 9, 29-31, and 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Mao and Aron in view of Orita

As noted above, Claims 3, 4, 6, 9, 29-31, and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mao and Aron in view of Orita. Since Claims 3, 4, 6, 9, 29-31, and 34 have been canceled, applicants submit that the aforementioned rejection is rendered moot.

Rejection of Claims 8 and 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Mao and Aron in view of Takano

As noted above, Claims 8 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mao and Aron in view of Takano. Since Claims 8 and 33 have been canceled, applicants submit that the aforementioned rejection is rendered moot.

Rejection of Claims 10 and 35 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Mao and Aron in view of Yamanoue

As noted above, Claims 10 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mao and Aron in view of Yamanoue. Since Claims 10 and 35 have been canceled, applicants submit that the aforementioned rejection is rendered moot.

Rejection of Claims 2, 15, 18, 20, 22, 25, 26, and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Mao and Aron in view of Simmon

As noted above, Claims 2, 15, 18, 20, 22, 25, 26, and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mao and Aron in view of Simmon. Since Claims 2, 18, 20, 22, 25, 26, and 28 have been canceled, and Claim 15 has been amended to include allowable subject matter, applicants submit that the aforementioned rejection is rendered moot.

Rejection of Claims 16, 17, 19, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Mao, Aron, and Simmon in view of Orita

As noted above, Claims 16, 17, 19, and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mao, Aron, and Simmon in view of Orita. Since Claims 16, 17, 19, and 21 have been canceled, applicants submit that the aforementioned rejection is rendered moot.

Rejection of Claim 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Mao, Aron, and Simmon in view of Yamanoue

As noted above, Claim 22 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mao, Aron, and Simmon in view of Yamanoue. Since Claim 22 has been canceled, applicants submit that the aforementioned rejection is rendered moot.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing claim amendments and remarks, applicants submit that all of the pending claims remaining in the application, i.e., Claims 1, 12, 15, 24, 27, and 37 are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and reexamination of the application and allowance of the remaining claims at an early date is solicited. If the Examiner has any questions or comments concerning this matter, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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